(540-477 B.C.)

Jainism & Mahavira (540-477 B.C.)

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(pp 429 ff. of Great Men of India)

There is an insufficient depicting in the Jain literature, of the religious soil from which Jainism, with its founder Mahavira sprang. The movement has been rightly called a reform movement, But what was it in the generating soil, that called for reform is not treated anywhere with right emphasis. So much is made of the legend of a prehistoric line of founders of a proto-Jainism, of which Jainism as we know it, is the latest outcome, that little if any attention has been paid to that which is, for the culture of our day, an historic fact, namely that a reform movement is begotten and determined, not by a fancied cosmic necessity for a line of teachers carrying out an independent plan but by a certain evolution in man's religious quest, born in a certain land at a certain time, which, for the wise man, shows symptoms of needed correction and expansion. Thus we see Jesus rising to show that man, in the new conditions of the Roman domination and 'Pax' was, not regarding his fellowman as just that as 'neighbour', as 'brother'. And Islam largely arose because of the polytheism, the founder witnessed at Mecca, and the growing polytheism in the Church of Christendom. Similarly, the founder of the Jain movement was a man urged by an inspiring call to rectify something he saw amiss in the accepted religious mandate of his day [illegible]
[illegible]

Nature-theism of the Vedic hymns had been inverted, and in place of seeking Deity in powers of nature, (the volte-face) the Deity was to be perceived in the essential nature of man. This is best called Immanence. 'This art thou', a learner was told in the Brahman Schools, 'Seek to know the Self, that is Brahman'. Both Mahavira and the Buddha taught the disciples to 'Search for the Self'. Both teachers were followers of the Brahman teaching of Immanence. Yet both teachers as such, set on foot a line of reformed teaching, not running counter to Immanence, but supplying something in which they deemed it lacking. What was this? [illegible]
The local conditions in the east far [illegible] away from the Madhya-des, the home of Brahmanism, made reform yet more needful.

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The reformer was charged with, inspired by, a mandate of help for his neighbours; how that mandate applied to the prevalent cult of his country & age, he may, or may not have discerned, being too near. If he did see it, the religious values of his own aftermen will have greatly changed by the time his own Sayings, and those of his helpers came to reach the form in which we read them today. In the days of those after-men a new polytheism had sprung up in northern India, in India, generally; and even if the founder had pointed out wherein he found the cult of his day faulty, it is only too likely that later editors will have failed to keep alive the original point of his teaching

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

"I willed to differ from the Brahmans and teach a new mandate of effort in becoming (bhavana, means making-to-become and not reflection)....

"I hold that to harm the body must involve a weakening of it and so weaken the use the man can make of it, in seeking the Better through it as vehicle....– in moderation it is all right."

"Gautama a Brahman and Maskari Gosala, were among my disciples. They accepted the teaching of Immanence holding that man had in himself the highest welfare, and the will to win it. They too were in favour of tapas but not in excess....

"I held women in high worth. They were with me in my teaching from the first. I was a married man with children....

"I did not seek men to leave the world. It was my wish to see them coming to will a More in their daily life and business. My very will was in this, worthy man at his trade, his field-work, his care for the less fortunate, his warding the sick, his seeing the More in the child, his seeing the More in his fellowman than he seemed the, his will in the man of the To Be.

"It was from the Unseen that I was mandated to teach the New...

[illegible]

"I came in time to hear of other men, two or three, also wanting to teach that which they found lacking in the current teaching of Immanence, but they had not kept in view the More that is in man, and I found them worthless.

[illegible]

"Monasticism was not always in Indian life. Brahmans left the world when elderly, but not the man of other classes

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let alone before he was elderly. Man had work to do, food to get, and he would have been much blamed had he left the world, when still strong. But the idea was beginning to take hold of men that they should leave the world early, and not only if they were Brahmans. This may have been due to the cult of Immanence, for in that it saw a More in man, it showed it to himself as not called upon to be merely earthman. Seeing himself as in a way the Highest, he could be only concerned with the highest things if he would be true to his nature. He was world-forsaker in order to be one who had become Brahman ([illegible]) so far as yet he could.

"Now men of other new messages were as such welcome to me till I found I could not rate highly their departures. Then when I was already elderly, I heard of the men of the Sakyas [illegible] (whom your world calls Buddhist). They did not approve of Tapas and this made my followers unwilling to welcome them. I wanted to meet their leader, who, as I heard, accepted the Immanence-teaching about the man, but held that the one thing needful in it was that man should not be held as being, nor as not being, but as becoming. I tried to see him, but failed, for the men in my company were silent about his movements & so we never met.

"In this, Gautama is shown [illegible] insisting to Upali that, of the three modes of Karma or deeds, the mode of the manas is more effectual in its result on man's life for good or evil than is the mode of bodily action. What I really taught was that bodily action is the vehicle of mind or purpose and, in the result of that purpose, respond to it. I never taught that body was the agent. Herein I have been misrepresented, as is the fate of all teachers of the More. I am not saying that Gautama misrepresented me. It was my disciples who did that. "Have you not yourself found it true," that "--- it is the disciple who wounds him worse of all" (Rudyard Kipling) ---

"The notion of Karma was beginning to dominate the men of India. He had learnt the notion, not from me, but from other teachers, who saw in deeds done a sort of seed sown, which could not be, as plants, rooted out save by tapas, and this was foolish. The

Can we treat Iqbal in the same way?

[illegible] *

I for my part have not invented a single phrase" - says the

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Karma, better actions, were enough to kill the effects of the earlier less worthy *Karma* so far as the doer himself was concerned. —

"I taught this with emphasis, but my men were no longer listening to what I taught ----

"Man in his care for animals has gone to strange lengths. He has had the idea that he might be reborn as one, and that hence it might be well not to treat them unworthily. I never held with this idea nor with the idea that noxious animals should not be killed. I had a firm belief that man could not be reborn save as man. Men have credited me with all sorts of theories in this, as in other things. On my shoulders got laid the childish ideas of the Many. Man in the More has much to suffer from his fellows, but he has also been their helper and therein his comfort ----.

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